

Name: **Bush Lake WY-030-24N97W12-2012**

FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory Findings on Record

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area?

No _____ Yes X (if yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the names of those areas):

a) Inventory Source: BLM Rawlins FO 1979 Wilderness Inventory Hard Copy Files_____

b) Inventory Area Name(s)/Number(s): Seven Lakes Initial Inventory WY-030-409_____

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): _____ Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming Wilderness Review Serial No. 66700 _____

d) BLM District (s)/Field Office(s): High Desert District/Rawlins Field Office

2. BLM Inventory Finds on Record:

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

The unit consists of approximately 400,000 acres north of the checkerboard and west of U.S. Highway 287. Man's activities are noticeable almost everywhere. Many roads, pipelines, power lines and telephone lines crisscross the area. In spite of the fact that many roadless tracts of 5,000 acres are found in the area, none have wilderness potential.

Inventory Source: M:\gis_workareas\Recreation\WSA\LandWilderCharc1979.shp

Area #/Name	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
Seven Lakes Initial Inventory WY-030-409	Yes (400,000 acres)	No	No	No	No

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

a. Area Number/Name: **Bush Lake WY-030-24N97W12-2012** Acreage: **9,104.76 acres**

(1) Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes ☐ X ☒ No ☐

Describe the boundaries of the area (roads, property lines, etc.). If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception. If more than one inventory area is involved, list the acres in each and evaluate each area/sub-area separately. In completing steps (1) – (5), use additional space as necessary.

The unit is bound on the northwest and west by the Rawlins Field Office boundary. The unit is bound on the northeast by Red Creek Road, a.k.a. BLM Road 3219. The unit is bound on the south by County Road 67 a.k.a. Tipton Road as well as state land.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS: (Include acreage, land ownership, location, topography, vegetation and summary of the major human uses/activities)

The Bush Lake Unit under consideration is **9104.76** acres of BLM public land. The topography consists, primarily, of rolling prairie, buttes, hills, and drainages including Red Creek and Bush Lake. Elevation ranges from 6,832 feet on the hilltops above the drainages to 6,670 feet at the bottom of the drainages. The dominant vegetation cover is mountain big sagebrush on the slopes and uplands of the unit and wet meadow cover along creeks and draws. The primary land use is livestock grazing. The primary, dispersed recreational activity in the area is hunting. The unit contains the following townships:

TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION	TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION
t24n	r97w	22	t24n	r96w	7
t24n	r97w	21	t24n	r97w	12
t24n	r97w	13	t24n	r96w	3
t24n	r97w	14	t24n	r96w	4
t24n	r97w	15	t24n	r96w	5
t24n	r97w	16	t24n	r96w	6
t24n	r97w	17	t24n	r97w	1
t24n	r97w	12	t25n	r96w	31
t24n	r97w	11	t25n	r96w	35
t24n	r97w	10	t25n	r96w	34
t24n	r97w	9	t25n	r96w	33
t24n	r97w	8	t25n	r96w	32
t24n	r96w	10	t25n	r96w	31
t24n	r96w	9	t25n	r96w	30
t24n	r96w	8			

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Description: The 14.10 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) and 4.50 miles of wilderness inventory roads (i.e., well access roads) detract from the unit's naturalness. Examples of these primitive routes and wilderness inventory roads are demonstrated in photo 2. When hiking across the Bush Lake Unit, the casual observer cannot escape the constant view of primitive routes and well access roads. These primitive routes create noticeable linear intrusions and disturbances that interrupt the experience of any wilderness character briefly encountered in areas untrammelled by the works of man.

The area contains 12 oil and gas wells throughout the Bush Lake Unit (see unit map). Evidence of oil and gas development is demonstrated in photos 1 and 6-12. These oil and gas installations within the unit represent permanent improvements and loss of primeval character. When examining the status of the oil and gas wells, eight are flowing, two are permanently abandoned, and one is shut-in. Despite the variation in status, these wells remain as existing installations that detract from the naturalness and are substantially noticeable to the casual observer while hiking through the unit. All wells, which are not abandoned, are managed as active wells and receive commercial vehicle traffic for periodic maintenance. This traffic would interrupt the casual observer's experience of wilderness character due to road dust plumes and the contrast between the white coloration of these vehicles moving across the tan, brown, and olive landscape. Well pads do not receive final reclamation approval until they have been plugged and abandoned. Visual contrasts created by surface disturbances, including well pad turn-arounds, soil exposure around the facilities, and a rectangular area of wheat grass, remain until final reclamation is established.

The Bush Lake unit also contains two man-made reservoirs (see locations in unit map and example in photo 13). When the casual observer encounters these man-made borrow pits and impounded reservoirs, the linear and textual contrast on the landscape attracts the attention of the observer to these modifications constructed with mechanized equipment.

The casual observer is often attracted to bodies of water while hiking. Water adds interest and diversity to the landscape. When arriving at any of the two reservoirs, the casual observer would notice that it is not a natural lake and that they have encountered an impounded, borrow pit. The hiker seeking refreshment from clean water, would quickly notice that this "reservoir" has been contaminated by cattle operations where the water is unfit for human consumption or swimming.

The numerous range improvements, including one water well (equipped with solar panels and tanks), two reservoirs, and .89 miles of fence, were developed, primarily, for commercial grazing operations. These range improvements are also impacted by commercial grazing operations giving the casual observer a perception that they are visitors to a cattle range rather than a wilderness untrammelled by the works of man. While the presence of cattle is compatible with a natural landscape for wilderness inventory purposes, the noticeable presence of numerous grazing-related developments in this unit is not.

In sum, the cumulative impacts on naturalness including the numerous oil and gas wells, primitive routes, and wilderness inventory roads have impaired the naturalness in the Bush Lake Unit to a level that is incompatible with the definitions of wilderness provided in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (incorporated in FLPMA 1976):

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

(3) Does the area or the remainder of the area (if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

(4) Does the area or the remainder of the area (if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational scenic or historical value)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

Summary of Analysis

Area Name and/or Number: Bush Lake WY-030-24N97W12-2012

Summary

Results of analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities of solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Check one:

_____ The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC).

___X___ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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Team members:

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